



Phone 863.465.2571
123 MAIN DRIVE ★ VENUS, FLORIDA 33960

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Archbold popular during spring break

“It has really opened my eyes!” “I have a student about to start graduate school for entomology (the study of insects) and I don't think he slept at all, just running around the buildings all night looking at insects.” “Your facilities are fantastic!” “The great thing about Archbold is its placement in an ecosystem that is not found anywhere else on Earth, so we had a unique experience.” These are just some of the many expressions we hear from students and faculty that visit Archbold Biological Station with their classes during their college spring break.

“We get visitors and groups from all over the world coming to Archbold”, states Facilities Coordinator, Ann Thompson. “In fact, we have a group coming from the Queen Mary University of London at the end of this month. Spring is a very busy time for us.”

Some of the other colleges that visited Archbold this spring are: Martin Methodist College from Tennessee, Pace University from New York, Siena College from Ohio, Syracuse University from New York, Florida International University, the University of Florida, Albion College from Michigan, and Concordia College from Minnesota. Students stay in the Adrian Archbold Lodge, which is one of Archbold's ultra-energy-efficient and water-efficient buildings, certified as LEED® Platinum. The upcoming generation of students really appreciate staying in 'green' accommodations.

“I’ve been to a lot of field stations but none of them were as nice or had the charm that Archbold does”, stated Mike Bush, Professor at Concordia College. He added, "Combined with the facilities at Archbold, which are among the best I've ever seen at a research station, this place has no equivalent with regard to undergraduate field courses." Coming to Archbold has allowed his class to have hands-on experience in the field and to gain experience working with each other in small groups, collecting and analyzing data. Prior to the field trip, students were required to familiarize themselves with the geological history, natural history, and conservation issues of central Florida.

“Archbold has figured prominently in various classes taught at Albion College, a private liberal arts college from Michigan”, states Emeritus Professor of Biology, Jeff Carrier. “The Station's proximity to the Florida scrub and location on the Lake Wales Ridge provides a glimpse into Florida's geological history and the uniquely adapted plants and animals that are found nowhere else. Our classes examine the biology of sub-tropical Florida, allowing us to ask questions about changes through time, both historical and cultural, as we have students ponder the issues we present in our course entitled ‘Florida: Paradise Lost?’ We have brought classes to Archbold from time-to-time over a period spanning almost twenty years. It never loses its allure and never fails to raise questions about the heartiness of the amazing living organisms we encounter.”

“It’s nice to see students from all different cultures and backgrounds work together in their studies, whether it’s focusing on one species or a certain habitat”, says Thompson. “It doesn’t matter if they are studying plants, birds, insects, frogs, Lake Annie, agriculture, or habitat restoration, or any combination of these, they always have fun at Archbold and leave with smiles on their faces and experiences to share with those back home.”

Executive Director, Hilary Swain added, "This is often the first time these students have visited Florida. We are not your typical beach and condo spring break. By visiting Archbold and Highlands County, they get to know the 'Other Florida'. Archbold attracts students from many countries to this special place where they can learn to connect their studies to real-world land-management and conservation issues. They gain an appreciation for the beautiful natural habitats, ranches, lakes, and history of our area. Many return in future years as graduate students, or sometimes as faculty bringing their own classes. Earlier this week I met a young man wandering quietly towards our Nature Trail who had driven over to revisit Archbold while on a family trip to Fort Myers. He told me the last time he was here was eight years ago as a student with Cornell University."

It's clear that Archbold and Highlands County instill enduring memories.

Photo 1: Dr. Stephen Deyrup's class from Siena College, Albany NY, looking for moths that live in *Crotalaria* plants. Photo by Archbold Biological Station.



Photo 2: Prof. Maria Lusky and students from Pace University, New York, tour Archbold's ranch as part of their documentary film-making class. #PaceDocs Photo by Archbold Biological Station.

